DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 253 056 FL 014 030

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TITLE Getting Students Involved: Classroom Activities Which Promote Communication.
INSTITUTION American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.
PUB DATE [84]
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Class Activities; *Classroom Communication; Classroom Techniques; *Communication Skills; *Communicative Competence (Languages); French; Instructional Materials; Intercultural Communication; Secondary Education; *Second Language Instruction

ABSTRACT

Three essays concerning second language classroom activities that promote learning of communication skills are presented. In "From Manipulation to Communication" (Renate A. Schulz), the importance of establishing minimal communicative objectives for classroom instruction skills is discussed, specifying situations in which students have to demonstrate communicative survival. Meaninfgul exercises for listening comprehension and/or reading and for listening-speaking integrative skills use (both monologue and interactional) also are outlined. "Stimulating Cross-Cultural Communication in Intermediate French Classes: Two Techniques" (Thomas H. Geno) presents two strategies for promoting discussion of cultural differences, one using student-generated topics for discussion of their own attitudes and one directing students to the target culture's attitudes on a given subject. "Warm-Ups and Time-Outs: Classroom Conversational Activities" (G. Ronald Freeman) outlines nine brief instant-involvement exercises for beginning a class session or for use as interludes from intense concentration during a class period. (MSE)

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GETTING STUDENTS INVOLVED

Classroom Activities Which Promote Communication

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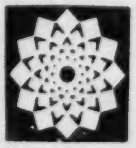

FROM MANIPULATION TO COMMUNICATION*

Renate A. Schulz

Communicative competence is a complex concept because it implies not only knowledge of vocabulary, control of grammatical structures, and the ability to differentiate between sounds, but as Leon Jakobovits points out, it also means control of the implicit levels of meaning (determined by the situational context) and the implicative level of meaning (those linguistic or non-linguistic components of meaning which give us insights into the speaker as a person).[1] In order to function on the latter two levels of meaning, the student needs to be aware of nonverbal communication, be it in paralinguistics (tone and voice qualities), kinesics (facial expressions, gestures, posture), or proxemics (body position in relation to others). Further, communicative competence, taken in its fullest sense, presupposes biculturalism, as both the speaker and the listener need to share certain knowledge of expectations of social rules, attitudes, etc.

Classroom teachers might be discouraged by this complex view of communicative competence. They might be tempted to throw up their hands in despair, wondering how all this can be taught in the traditional classroom setting. Again, let us not expect our students to become perfect bilinguals, biculturals, and communication specialists, but let us attempt to give them a conscious awareness of that intricate multi-faceted human phenomenon called language; and let us aim to develop in our students a realistic, limited level of competence, based on time and situational constraints, in actually using the language to communicate—to share experience—in real life situations.

In addition to the linguistic objectives specifying what grammatical structures and vocabulary should be mastered in each instructional level, we need to establish a set of minimal communicative objectives which specify situations in which students have to demonstrate communicative survival skills. These situations might include obtaining food, housing, transportation, medical help, and police assistance; making friends; reacting appropriately in social situations, such as introductions, apologies; at meals, birthdays, weddings, etc.; finding one's way in the foreign country; describing one's background; etc.

*Revised version of a keynote address to the First Joint Conference of the Washington and Oregon Associations of Foreign Language Teachers, Seattle, October 8, 1976.

1. Foreign Language Learning—A Psycholinguistic Analysis of the Issues (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1970).

What can we do to aid our students in developing communicative competence? Research in native language learning indicates two necessary conditions for furthering this ability:

1. Live, meaningful, situational contexts which permit or demand personal involvement, and
2. the need (motivation) to interact with someone through language.

If we assume these conditions apply also to foreign language learning, meaningfulness, motivation, and personal involvement become key words for communicative language practice in the classroom. The need for meaningfulness is obvious, because unless the student is able to attach meaning to what he says, hears, or sees, he is merely practicing noise-making and not language. That motivation or need facilitates learning is also a truism. The need for personal involvement is so aptly stated by Almon G. Hoye[2] who writes

A student can be trained to repeat patterns, phrases, and words in a foreign language. He can be taught the structure and form of a language. But unless it all has personal meaning to him, he will not learn. Personal meaning is unique to each individual and is made up of involvement, experience, reflection, and discovery of the unknown.

Christina Bratt Paulston has classified language exercises into manipulative, meaningful, and communicative.[3] Illustration I attempts to explain the essential differences between the three types of exercises.

Examining current textbooks and other commercially available instructional materials we find the emphasis (with rare exceptions) heavily on the manipulative aspects of language learning. For meaningful and communicative language practice, classroom teachers depend to a large extent on their own imagination and creativity. It is difficult to develop an extensive battery of exercises for the traditional classroom which would m[illegible]ll criteria for communicative activities listed above. The usual classroom co[illegible]aints make it impracticable to provide a large variety of real communicative situations. However, if the teacher keeps in mind the criteria of meaningfulness, motivation, and involvement, many types of activities can be conducted in the classroom to further our goal.

It should be remembered that communicative competence is not only limited to the oral skills. While communication basically involves giving and obtaining information, this exchange need not be simultaneous: many real-life communicative situations require just one language skill, e.g., reading instructions, listening to a radio program, leaving a spoken message with a telephone answering service, etc.

2. "Flexibility—From Folly to Promise," pp. 29-33 in Lorraine A. Strasheim, ed., Foreign Language in a New Apprenticeship for Living (Bloomington, Ind.: The Indiana Language Program, 1971), p. 33.

3. "Structural Pattern Drills: A Classification," Foreign Language Annals, 3 (1970): 187-93.

Illustration I

Classification of Classroom Exercises

MANIPULATIVE	MEANINGFUL	COMMUNICATIVE
purely manipulative; response predictable; understanding of meaning not essential for response; artificial classroom exercise: e.g. repeating dialog lines; reciting dialog; most types of pattern drills; cued question-answer drills; etc.	understanding of meaning essential for response; answer predictable: e.g. directed dialog; many types of question-answer exercies, where answer is known to interrogator (such as, "What day is it today?" or "What is the color of your dress?" type questions), etc.	understanding of meaning essential for response; answer unpredictable; new information conveyed; situational realism: e.g. interviewing exchange student; simulating a meal in a restaurant; free completion exercises (such as: If I were a teacher, I would....); etc.

Artificial classroom exercise ⟶ could happen in real life

adapted from: Christina Bratt Paulston, "Structural Pattern Drills: A Classification," Foreign Language Annals, 3 (1970): 187-93.

The following list presents some possible activities to develop communicative competence in a classroom setting. It is not intended as a complete inventory of strategies to develop communicative ability, but it should provide the teacher with a small repertoire of activities which lend themselves well to meaningful classroom interaction.

Meaningful Exercises for Listening Comprehension and/or Reading

(1) Students react to true/false statements about persons, objects, events, visuals, etc: e.g., Next Saturday there will be a football game at our school. (Note: The teacher should make certain that the item refers to a known referent in the students' surroundings.)

(2) Students follow directions or instructions:
   a. by drawing a line on a prescribed route on a map;
   b. by drawing a picture according to instructions or according to a description (e.g, You see a large house, four stories high. To the right of the house there is a big tree. Between the house and the tree is the family car, etc.);
   c. by assembling cut-out objects on a flannel board or table according to directions;
   d. by physically acting out commands given by the teacher or a tape recorder.

(3) Students listen to (or read) a description of known people, objects, places, monuments, or events, and guess who or what is being spoken about.

(4) Values clarification strategies. These exercises can easily be personalized, and give the student the opportunity to express a personal opinion with very limited linguistic ability.

(5) Don't forget routine classroom communications in the target language, such as greetings, roll call, routine instructions, compliments (praise), and reprimands ('give em hell' in the foreign language!).

Meaningful Exercises for Listening-Speaking Integrative Skills Use (also applicable for reading-writing and listening-writing)

Interaction Techniques

I. Uncued question-answer exercises:
   (1) Questions based on a dialogue, a reading passage, a film, a picture, an object, or on the general surroundings;
   (2) Personalized questions which elicit information (facts), opinion, reaction and/or feeling.
   (3) Students restate facts, opinions, and feelings uttered by their classmates in response to questions by the teacher or discussion leader.

II. Structured interview (simulated or real):
   (1) Students obtain specific information from a teacher, a foreign student, a visitor, an immigrant from the target country, fellow classmates, students from advanced language classes, 'famous personalities' played by other students, etc.
   (2) Students give specific information to people listed in (1). (Note: Interviews can be conducted in class or outside of class, over the telephone or person to person. If the number of available native speakers is limited, your advanced students might like to cooperate with your elementary classes.)
   (3) Students interact by using teacher-prepared conversation cards which guide the conversations by written suggestions of questions to be asked.

(4) Students interact using realistic props (e.g., a menu, an identification card, a class schedule, an application for a driver's license or a passport, a hotel registration card, a grocery list) which add realism to the conversation by suggesting a communicative setting for the interaction. For instance, students play the roles of hotel keeper and traveler and go through the registration procedure.

III. Simulations (role play):
greetings; introductions; asking or giving directions; invitations; making a date; ordering a meal; shopping in various stores for various items; business transactions at a railroad station, bank, post office, etc.; emergencies at the doctor's office, hospital, police department (e.g., reporting an accident, a stolen handbag, a lost passport); talking one's way out of trouble (e.g., a traffic ticket, tardiness, a forgotten assignment).

IV. Games:
(1) Adaptations of popular television games, such as What's My Line?, Password, You Don't Say, or Twenty Questions
(2) Any type of guessing game where students have to ask or answer questions to find the identity of a real or imaginary person, the name of an object, monument, animal, event, etc.
(3) Advertising: Students present an advertisement of a product without actually naming the product. Other group members guess what is being advertised.
(4) Whiz-Quizz: Student teams compete, answering factual questions about the target language, culture, civilization, current events, the local community, etc.

Monologue Techniques

I. Reporting on specific topics, e.g., family background, school life (daily schedule, friends, favorite subjects, vacation; listing activities performed during certain periods of the day; listing steps involved in an activity (e.g., writing a letter, ordering a meal in a restaurant, baking a cake, etc.).

II. Summarizing or paraphrasing: Students summarize what they have heard others say in reports listed under item I, or what they have read.

III. Describing persons, live actors, pictures or a sequence of pictures (cartoons), objects, or events: A good adaptation of a description technique asks a student to describe a picture which he alone sees. The other members of his group have to replicate the picture according to the point-by-point description they hear.
e.g., I see a strange creature. It has....

Try it!

IV. Gouin series: A student orally describes actions he is simultaneously performing. Note: The props and settings utilized in an audio-motor unit can be re-used effectively for an active speaking exercise.

V. Show and tell: A student shows a photograph of family members, friends, or places, a vacation memento, or something he has made, and tells about the people or things pictured. For example, students can demonstrate how to prepare a favorite recipe, how to fix a flat tire, how to make some craft item, how to play a game or sport, how to dance the polka, etc.

VI. Completion exercises, such as incomplete sentences:

e.g., If I were a teacher, I . . . . .
The ideal husband is a man who . . . .
When I come home after school, I . . . .

Note: These completion exercises can be used as interaction activities by letting other members of the group restate or report what their classmates have said or written.

VII. Libretto or narration writing: Students invent their own libretto or narration to accompany a silent film (show film without sound track), a filmstrip, or a series of slides or pictures. (Most schools have in their media library filmstrips or slides on the geography, history, arts, etc. of various countries which can be utilized for this purpose.) A variation of this technique would be a student-produced radio program (real or simulated) where students report on news, weather, and sports in the target language.

A major dilemma in teaching communication skills in the foreign language classroom is that communicating, by definition, involves free response, limited only by the natural and logical constraints of the communicative situation. However, especially in the beginning levels, students need structure and guidance on what to say (or write), because usually their mental maturity (what they want to say) is much more advanced than their linguistic maturity (what they can say) in the target language. Therefore, in devising exercises for communicative competence, varying degrees of structure for the suggested activities should be provided to permit the student to successfully complete a communicative assignment within his limited linguistic competence. Structure can be provided by listing the points of information which should be obtained by the student in an interview; by specifying or suggesting what information could be included in a report; or by outlining the approximate sequence of events in a role-play activity.

Another important point to be considered when teaching for communicative competence is the question of error correction. How should we correct the mistakes the student invariably makes when given some freedom to express himself? How can we prevent the student from establishing incorrect speech habits?

First, it must be remembered that communication is not synonymous with error-free production of a language, native or foreign. The aim of communication exercises is to encourage the student to get his message across—to express himself freely in a real language situation. The teacher will defeat the purpose if he interrupts the student with corrections after each utterance. The student will be embarrassed, intimidated, and discouraged; his thought processes are interrupted; and the communicative realism of the situation escapes, because the student feels that what he says has no importance as long as he says it correctly.

There are those in the foreign language teaching profession who maintain, along with Lord Chesterfield, that "knowing any language imperfectly is very little better than not knowing it at all." But maybe we need to consider Chuang Tsze who stated that "the raison d'être of language is an idea to be expresed. When the idea is expressed, the language may be ignored." When engaging in communicative practice, the teacher's tolerance for errors must be higher

than during a pattern drill. This does not mean that linguistic errors become irrelevant. But the teacher must become selective in error correction. Just as the mother of a young child would not overtly correct her son when he comes home in tears reporting that "Johnny hitted me," foreign language teachers must learn to listen for the message and concern themselves mainly with those errors which can cause misunderstanding and interfere with communication. If your French student, while describing his family, says "Mon père est un professeur," do not wince and interrupt in horror with a pattern drill! If you feel the need for correction, do so indirectly, for instance by restatement (such as, "Ah, votre père est professeur?"), recuing, or suggesting some correct possibilities, if the student flounders in his search for a response.

It is hoped that the reader does not construe these comments as belittling the importance of correct language use. Linguistic correctness is intimately linked to communicative ability. However, insistence on error-free language production should be during the presentation and drill phases of language instruction. Manipulative exercises have a definite place in the classroom to help the student develop a grammatical sensitivity for correct language patterns. However, such exercises are definitely skill getting activities. If we view language as a means of communication, rather than exclusively as a grammatical obstacle course, we must also provide skill using exercises, where students can apply what they have learned in a real language situation, to see whether they are actually able to communicate—to share experience—with another person in the foreign language.

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STIMULATING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERMEDIATE FRENCH CLASSES: TWO TECHNIQUES

Thomas H. Geno

Cross-cultural oral communication should, by its very nature, occur on two, two-way channels: person to person and culture to culture. A major stumbling block in realizing this interchange is, however, that our intermediate students have usually had little, if any, opportunity in the foreign language classroom to reflect upon or to express their own views and feelings on precise segments of their own cultural background. It then follows that they are equally ignorant of the lexical items needed to carry on meaningful communication of 'foreign' cultural concepts in the target language. Quite simply, if they don't know, understand, and appreciate themselves, how can they possibly know, understand, and appreciate others - much less communicate these ideas in French?

The Intermediate Student

Can we, first of all, somewhat agree upon what constitutes these so-called 'intermediate' students? Experience has led this observer to arrive at the following collective portrait:

They have been more or less audiolingually trained, but not having followed through on a totally programmed sequence (few of them go beyond 2 years) they can only listen and read with any ease. Their speaking skills have been exercised, but hardly enough (given the size of most beginning classes), and those oral exercises to which they have been exposed were not always meaningful stepping stones leading to true oral communication. Their writing skills are almost non-existent.

So, we have students with a fairly good general background in phonology and syntax, but their lexicon is de-personalized and found wanting when it comes to self expression, be it free or guided. Since pedagogical stress has often been placed on the receptive skills, these students are relatively passive; the occasions to activate their accumulated linguistic achievements have been few - again, for reasons we all know only too well.

If we haven't lost them by now, they are these 'hybrids' who find themselves at the height of frustration: they have many disparate (and desperate!) elements in their computers, but have never had the chance to program them for meaningful output.

Still being motivated - as their presence in our classes would seem to indicate - they earnestly want to activate the entire mechanism - they want to send, as well as to receive. In Chomskian terms we might say that they have some degree of competence, but they are lacking in performance; De Sauze would say that they might have the "langue" but do not possess the "parole."

Another important distinction to be made concerning this group is that they are not yet identifiable as French majors or even minors. Still, it is reasonable to assume that if all these young people are provided with evidence of their performance capabilities at this level, their decision to drop or to go on with French might very well take place in our intermediate classes. Might not proof of performance capability somewhat stem the tide of the tremendous attrition that takes place immediately after the so-called intermediate French course?

A Word of Advice

Please do not lose sight of the fact that the sole purpose of suggesting the strategies which follow is to allow for and encourage intermediate student performance. The performance might very well end up being the 'interlanguage' about which Rebecca Valette and Larry Selinker speak that is, a linguistic expression somewhere between competence and performance, between "langue" and "parole," but we should rather like to think of it as being an 'intralanguage:' that is, it can be understood and even performed by a given class, because it is the common French idiom of communication of that class at that particular time in development.

Unrealistic goals at this level, such as 'precision,' 'clarte,' and 'le mot juste,' —not to mention on-the-spot correction—have no place in the intermediate student performance which we are encouraging. We must still remember that we find ourselves in that strange netherworld of the 'intermediate plateau' where the affective goals almost have to outweigh the cognitive. The need for communication and the desire to communicate resulting in some kind of performance govern the whole process. From these affective desires, the cognitive development will automatically flow.

Technique Number One: FROM THE STUDENT TO THE SUBJECT

This first communicative device centers around student-generated discussion ideas. Chart 1 contains a partial list of some subjects for discussion which our intermediate students have proposed for class use over the last several semesters. I passed them out to my classes, we looked them over carefully, discussed any unknowns, discussed the viability of the suggestions, and then put them aside.

Step 2 involved my choosing five chefs de groupe from among the 'go getters' who had readily identified themselves during the first few weeks of class. Each of the five chefs was assigned four other students, and the class was divided into five groups of five students each.

I asked the chefs to guide, cajole, and persuade their group's members in a pro-con discussion, in French, as to the possibility of their group's discussing one of the ideas set forth. I further added that they should not hesitate to add new subjects to the list. Chart 2 lists the actual topics which were chosen.

I gave a 'regular' assignment to the class and told them that we would be picking up on this 'communication activity' as a part of the next class. In parting I asked the chefs de groupe to meet with me so that their roles could be clarified; some of their tasks were as follows:

(1) Keep all group discussions in French—this is most difficult!
(2) Provide for total participation from within the group.
(3) Designate a secrétaire for recording all the new lexical items needed to convey the appropriate idea.
(4) Examine both the positive and negative features of the discussion item.
(5) Encourage research in both French and English sources.
(6) Prepare a ditto sheet with the new lexical items so that multiple copies may be made and distributed to the entire class.
(7) Decide on the format of the presentation to be made to the class.
(8) Decide the exact role which each group member will perform within the format.
(9) Encourage note-taking; discourage mercilessly written texts: this is oral communication, not written!
(10) Keep close track of the preparation done by each group member.
(11) Be prepared to mark each group member on his or her participation.
(12) Mark on a superior, above average, average, below average scale.
(13) Prepare open-ended questions and provocative statements to encourage the listeners' participation after the presentation.

In all cases the leaders performed admirably. They explained their tasks to their groups and then set about organizing their work. The groups met during class periods on two occasions; most groups also met on at least two other occasions outside class periods.

The presentations to the class were divided into travail préliminaire and the présentation finale. In the former, each group presented its basic lexical findings to everyone else so that communication would not be hindered by unknowns. Chart 3 shows the result of an exploration lexicale done by one of the groups. Group members pronounced the items, used them in context and, in some cases, even gave the class members a chance to use the item.

The results of this travail préliminaire were most rewarding: items had been student-generated, they were basic to the subject matter, they immediately became active vocabulary utterances common to the entire class (the 'intralanguage' about which we spoke earlier), they had taken minimal acquisition time, and student need and desire for immediate and pertinent communication of ideas had motivated their research.

The présentation finale took several forms: debate within the group, a sidewalk cafe discussion among friends, a TV interview, a situation dramatique. All formats chosen seemed to have suited each group's collective personality.

Class participation following each group's presentation was above average since all of the subjects chosen had been discussed at least generally by everyone at one time or another. The topics were timely, of high interest, and certainly student-oriented in their quest for opinions. The travail préliminaire had, of course, broken down the potential for non-communication which only too often results from unstructured, freelance discussion groups which go off into their own orbit, leaving the rest of the class behind.

Chart 4 allowed for making precise evaluations during performance and provided handy space for noting common errors, making observations, clarifications, etc. Any notes were presented only after each presentation and were directed to the entire group - never to an individual. The space at the bottom was used only for noting who had participated from the class as a whole, since total participation and growth were the prime goal. I also discovered that these sheets made very good permanent records to be added to a grade book.

Each group's présentation finale required a class period of 50 minutes: 20 minutes of performance, 20 minutes of class discussion and 10 minutes for my commentary. In all we had used about 7 class sessions for this initial process of directing the students from themselves to the subject via the transmission of their own ideas to others - and they had expressed themselves, however humbly, in French.

Technique Number Two: FROM THE STUDENT TO THE TARGET CULTURE

The second structure, much like the first in its procedures, now directs the students from themselves via the ideas of others to the target culture's attitudes on a given subject. Discussion, which I almost prefer to tag 'conflict,' is almost bound to result from this venture.

I suggest using this vehicle later in the semester (perhaps as a final class activity) for the following reasons:

(1) New working groups will almost automatically be identified as class members get to know each other better.
(2) New chefs de groupe will identify themselves and be eager to serve.
(3) The 'regular' program (whatever its content) will have added greater sophistication to the class's performing skills (forme).
(4) The sophistication mentioned above will also allow for the use of more in-depth material (fond).
(5) Total classroom rapport (student to student and professor to student) will be on a much more relaxed level.

The thesis is that intermediate students have not been given the occasion to think about, to research, and to express their ideas on many of the cultural concepts underlying human activity. More often than not our young people are simply unaware of a particular cultural attitude; they might be taking it for granted. In the foreign language classroom they have most probably been so occupied with the acquisition of the language that the application (and resulting appreciation) to cross-cultural communication has simply never occured.

It is up to us, therefore, to put the issues before the students in a provocative manner. A way which I have found most rewarding is to present them with conflicting aspects of the same issue—in this case, the French and the American.

The 'gimmick,' however, is to get from the students to the subject. Do they have an opinion on a given issue? Is the opinion objective or subjective? Is it intellectually sound or is it based on pure emotion? Only after their own valid opinions have been aired can they be put into conflict with those of others.

A key issue then, is: can students be confronted with the ideas of others if they have none on the same subject? Can they really ever understand and appreciate others if they don't understand and appreciate themselves? You see, our first premise still holds true.

Chart 5 presents a partial list of general areas of possible discussion. They are broad in scope and allow for in-depth exploration of a more sophisticated nature. They are subject areas which we all take too much for granted and seldom really explore: at the same time they are areas subject to discussion among the French; in most cases the French and the Americans have different histories, structures, policies, and opinions underlying the same general idea. Let us arbitrarily choose 'Politics' as a vehicle for discussion in one of our groups.

In Chart 6 you will see a graphic representation of how we can move the student from within to the conflict from without. You will notice this takes place in phases. Moving on to Chart 7 you will notice that Phase I attempts to probe each group member's psyche concerning the topic in question. We would ask each student to carefully examine the questions and to prepare oral responses to them. Students will automatically add their own questions to such an 'opener.'

The lexical hydra immediately raises its ugly heads; several of these can be severed quickly if the professor prepares a 'starter list' of some of the potential threats. The students themselves will sever others as their work progresses. Again, they should research, note and copy the lexical items for the entire class as a part of the travail préparatoire. A possible starter list for the political subject is found in Chart 8.

Phase I follows through to its logical conclusion as the entire class is exposed to the travail préparatoire prepared by each group, and by the professor's starter list. Good planning on the part of the professor and his various chefs de groupe will now direct participants to Phases II and III of the process. Charts 9 and 10 show some typical guide questions for these steps as prepared by the professor for a starter: the chefs and their groups will add to these discussion possibilities.

The questions in Phases II and III necessitate resources which we do not always have at our beck and call in the collection of intermediate readers gathering dust on our office shelves. No single author's optic nor one editor's selected short subjects in anthology form is going to fill the bill with this type of classroom procedure. Ultimately the best materials, be they French or English (peu importe) are those which we have researched ourselves prior to the beginning of this procedure an those which our students are led to discover in the course of their preparation. I prefer to class these resources as literature with an l minuscule as opposed to Literature with an L majuscule, for most of them are not to be found in the 840 (Literature of Romance Languages) section of our libraries—especially not in 841 (Poetry), 842 (Drama), 843 (Fiction) where we usually think that all writing in French is done. Try the

320's (Political Science), 330's (Economics), 370's (Education) and 390's (Customs and Folklore); browse around in the 700's (The Arts); the holdings in the 900's (General Geography and History) never cease to be a source of amazement. These 'new' books not only provide a tremendous source of knowledge to our students, but they also help us to bone up on our research and lead us to new uses for old skills.

Other resources which our students can be led to discover will include TIME, Newsweek, L'Express, Le Point, Le Monde, The New York Times, French television and radio programs, etc. Students will also glean information from their professors in political science, history, and philosophy if they're just reminded to do so. In all cases the results of their research come into the classroom in French and a well prepared travail préliminaire presented to the entire class seems to be the key to the success that we've had thus far.

Phase IV (Chart 11,) synthesis and conflict, shows the students in their best light. Discussion, although still not always "le français de France, le français français" as Leon Damas would say, stimulated by the guide questions in phases II and III, brings the effort to a most rewarding conclusion. The students are communicating with each other, within the groups and to the class as a whole. They are expressing their own ideas on their own cultural concepts and they are learning how to know (and not necessarily always appreciate) those of the French. By adapting these two suggestions to our own classroom situations, we can at least start to take our students from the classroom to the world via the French Connection.

CHART 1

SUJETS A DISCUTER

1. Mon experience personnelle avec la France (avec un pays francophone)
2. L'euthanasie: pour ou contre?
3. Ma "couleur" politique.
4. Les problèmes raciaux: où en sommes-nous?
5. Le mouvement feministe: pour ou contre?
6. La peine de mort: protection ou sauvagerie?
7. L'avortement: pour ou contre?
8. Le "Concorde": bénédiction ou malédiction?
9. Comment connaître les vins?
10.
11.

CHART 2

SUJETS CHOISIS

1. Que pensez-vous de la co-habitation en dehors des liens de mariage?
2. Devrait-on légaliser la prostitution aux USA?
3. Observations sur la mort. Y a-t-il une vie après la mort?
4. Devrait-on légaliser l'usage de la marijuana aux USA?
5. Que peut-on faire contre la violence à la television?

CHART 3

Mes observations sur la mort. Y a-t-il une vie après la mort?

EXPLORATION LEXICALE

assommé - stunned
attenter à ses jours - to attempt suicide
se suicider - to commit suicide
un bord - brink, edge
un bourdonnement - a buzzing
le ciel - sky
le paradis - heaven
l'enfer (m.) - hell
la foi - faith
un sondage d'opinion publique - public opinion poll
inattendu - unexpected
un rêve - dream
la tension artérielle - blood pressure
la thanatologie - the study of human death and dying
l'infini (m.) - the infinite
(adj) - unmeasurable
de loin - at a distance
remarquer - to notice
se trouver dans - to find oneself in

CHART 4

GROUPE: _____
(d'après le sujet discuté)

Etudiant(e)	Participation	Forme	Fond	Note du chef	Note du Prof
Chef du groupe					
Etudiant(e) A					
Etudiant(e) B					
Etudiant(e) C					
Etudiant(e) D					

OBSERVATIONS:

PARTICIPATION DES AUTRES

CHART 5

SUJETS DE CONTROVERSE
(en France et aux USA)

1. La Politique: nécessité ou tradition?
2. La Religion: force ou faiblesse?
3. Le terrorisme international: que peut-on y faire?
4. Le Communisme: où en sommes-nous après 60 ans?
5. L'Imperialisme: mythe ou réalité?
6. La Musique: les "anciens" contre les "modernes"
7. La crise de l'énergie mondiale: comment peut-on y faire face?
8. Le Moyen-Orient: source d'une 3ème guerre mondiale?

CHART 6

LA POLITIQUE
(schéma pédagogique)

Phase I	student's political stance (with lexical "starter" by prof)	
Phase II	Political Institutions-USA (students continue lexicon)	Political Institutions-France (students continue lexicon)
Phase III	Current political realities-USA (lexicon continues)	Current political realities-France (lexicon continues)
Phase IV	Synthesis=Conflict (discussion)	

CHART 7

LA POLITIQUE - Phase 1

Questions - Guide

1. Quelle est ma "couleur" politique?
2. Quelle est l'origine de cette orientation?
3. Jusqu'à quel point est-ce que je m'engage dans la politique?
4. Quelle est l'orientation politique de ma famille?
5. Est-ce que le jeu politique m'intéresse? Pourquoi? Pourquoi pas?
6. A-t-on le droit ou le devoir de voter?
7.
8.

CHART 8

LA POLITIQUE (suite)

(lexique de base)

un parti (démocrate, républicain, socialiste, etc)

un votant, un électeur
un vote
voter
un bulletin de vote
le scrutin
une urne
un syndicat
un congrès politique
un comité
un impôt
un imposable
imposable
empiéter
totalitaire

une ethnie
un group ethnique
un groupe (de pression) (minoritaire)
une subvention
subventionner
le ministre
le ministère
le décret-loi
un sondage d'opinion publique
un pot-de-vin
faire de la politique

CHART 9

LA POLITIQUE (suite)

Phase II - Questions-Guide

1. Recherchez les origines, l'évolution et l'orientation du parti démocrate.
2. Faites de même pour le parti républicain.
3. Quelles sont les tendances actuelles de ces deux partis?
4. Etes-vous d'accord avec un de ces groupes politiques?
5. Quels sont les autres partis politiques aux USA? Recherchez leurs origines, leur évolution et leur orientation.
6.
7.

CHART 10

LA POLITIQUE (suite)

Phase III - Questions-Guide

1. Quels sont les partis politiques français?
2. Recherchez leurs origines, leur évolution et leurs tendances actuelles.
3. Quelles différences trouvez-vous entre les systèmes politiques américain et français?
4. Si vous étiez français(e), à quel parti politique appartiendriez-vous? Pourquoi?
5.
6.

CHART 11

LA POLITIQUE (suite)

Phase IV - Synthèse = Discussion

1. Est-ce que les partis politiques sont nécessaires?
2. Quel pays a le meilleur système politique? Pourquoi?
3. Quel pays a le système politique le plus compliqué? Pourquoi?
4. Peut-on être un homme honnête et un politicien en même temps?

WARM-UPS AND TIME-OUTS: CLASSROOM CONVERSATIONAL ACTIVITIES

G. Ronald Freeman

The first few minutes of a language class can be frustrating. Most students have difficultly 'tuning in' to the second language, and latecomers make futile any immediate attempt to introduce the day's major learning activity. For this reason, I have found it enjoyable and profitable to begin the class with a brief, 'instant-involvement' exercise. These activities occupy the first five to ten minutes of the class, frequently beginning with the moment I arrive.

Self-Portrait

Students are asked to draw something representative of themselves. Later, either collectively or in groups, the students analyze each other's portraits.

Draw Me!

Students draw a 'crazy' picture—a three-legged, polka-dotted elephant with two heads and four tails, an apple with four legs and a big, grotesque eye at the end of the stem, etc. Students should be cautioned not to show their drawing to anyone. In class, one student is selected to give oral instructions to classmates, who must reproduce the original drawing. At the teacher's discretion, students may or may not be permitted to ask additional questions, such as: "What color is the apple?" This activity can be used over a period of several days.

Three Things in Your Wallet

This is an exercise that requires no advance preparation. When the students are seated, the teacher asks them to look in their wallets or purses for a specified number of items. These items could be:

(1) The three things of most value to the student;
(2) The three strangest things;
(3) The three things the student dislikes the most;
(4) The one thing the student would want to save in case of a fire;
(5) The one thing that reminds the student of an important experience.

Once the students have selected their items, they are instructed to tell other students about them. This 'showing-and-telling' phase might begin in groups and later be expanded to the entire class.

At a later date, this same activity might use clothes, the body, or the classroom instead of purses and wallets. Some instructors might object to such a question as "Tell which part of your body you like the most," but I have heard very worthwhile responses to that question. Students have singled out their eyes, their hands, and their feet to express their appreciation for the gift of sight or mobility.

Category Bingo

This activity is useful for working with such topics as food, clothing, the house, the body, professions, etc. In addition, it can be presented with little or no prior planning. As students enter the room, they are told to draw a sixteen-square box on a sheet of paper. To avoid confusion, the teacher might hand out a dittoed sheet with the squares already indicated or draw a model on the chalkboard. The teacher then indicates a category, and the students fill the sixteen squares with names of items from that category. The finished card might look like this:

Category: MEN'S CLOTHING

shirt	T-shirt	jacket	belt
pants	handker-chief	overcoat	sweat-shirt
vest	shoes	sandals	gloves
belt	bathing suit	tie	socks

If the students cannot remember sixteen items, they might be allowed one 'bonus' square, or a master list of vocabulary can be written on the chalkboard or included on the dittoed sheet. After allowing three to five minutes to fill in the squares, the teacher randomly reads words aloud from the category. A student with four words in a line—horizontally, vertically, or diagonally—shouts "Bingo" or some other appropriate comment. The teacher asks the student to read the four words and checks them against the list of words read.

Signatures

As they enter the room, students are handed a dittoed sheet on which are written several descriptions of experiences or characteristics people might have:

(1) Speaks three languages _____
(2) Was born in the state where you were born _____
(3) Took a bath or shower this morning _____
(4) Went to bed after midnight last night _____
(5) Knows how to conjugate the verb "to go" in the future _____

Students circulate around the room, asking other students questions to find out if they meet the description. For example, they might begin by asking several people if they took a bath that morning. Once they find someone who says "Yes," they ask that person to sign his or her name in the space provided after that item. To encourage more movement, the teacher might say that no student may sign another's sheet more than twice.

The $20,000 Pyramid

Although this activity requires a certain amount of preparation, it is worth the effort in the excitement and enthusiasm it generates. Prior to class, the instructor prepares 3 X 5 cards for six to ten categories. The categories may be as simple or as complex as the class level dictates.

(cut away)	Things we carry	(cut away)	Things in pairs
Fold over	purse umbrella baby magazine newspaper briefcase	Fold over	shoes twins scissors couple eyeglasses pants

After selecting two-member teams equal to the number of category cards, the teacher invites the first team to come up and draw a category from a hat or bag. The person to give the clues is allowed a few moments to study the words. So that the other students feel involved, they should be shown the words to be used. At a signal, one student gives clues and the second student attempts to guess the word. They are racing against the clock, and their total time will be matched against the total time of each of the other teams. After the first team has finished or exhausted the maximum allowable time, a second team comes up and repeats the process. The team finishing with the shortest elapsed time is declared the winner.

Chain Rejoinder

The instructor makes a statement to which several students reply with logical comments or rejoinders. Example: "I think I'll go fishing this weekend." Comments: "Where are you going?" "That doesn't sound like much fun." "Who are you going with?" "I don't like to fish." "Poor fish, I wish someone would catch you with a hook and a worm."

Topics

Upon entering the room, the teacher writes a topic word or sentence on the chalkboard, for example, "Family." The students, either in groups or individually, write as many questions as they can on that topic. Students then work in pairs and ask each other the questions they have formulated. This exercise is especially useful in teaching students how to structure questions properly in the target language.

Advice

This activity is a problem-solving technique. As students enter the room, they are told that their advice on a problem will be appreciated. The topic is announced, explained, or dramatized, and students offer suggestions on handling the difficulty. The topic, as well as the resulting advice, may be either serious or light.

Typical advice-called-for problems:

(1) Five qualities of an ideal girlfriend.
(2) How to get rid of a male chauvinist.
(3) What Mexico should about overpopulation.
(4) My advice to President Carter.
(5) Three ways to deal with the problem of illegal immigrants.
(6) How to avoid marriage.
(7) What it takes to get an 'A' in this class.
(8) How _____ ought to spend the summer.
(9) The best way to learn a second language.
(10) How to improve the class.

Once the students have prepared their suggestions and advice, they form groups to discuss and compare counsel. The teacher may want to appoint a secretary for each group who will later report to the entire class.

With all of these activities, a word of caution is necessary. With the rejection of a mechanical drill approach to language learning, one danger is to go to the opposite extreme and make the class nothing more than 'fun and games.' Both extremes are inadvisable. A class of nothing but drills usually turns students off. Fun and games every day, on the other hand, runs the danger of having students not take the subject seriously. Language acquisition requires grammar, cultural insights, and conversational activities. Strategies are needed in all three areas to make students enthusiastic, so that they want to learn more of the language. The above activities are offered as brief warm-ups or interludes from the intense concentration required to achieve proficiency in a second language. They are not meant as a substitute for coordinated, systematic language drill and assimilation. It is when such assimilation is taking place or has occurred that these exercises have their greatest value.